CLAIMS

1. A method for admission control of packet flows in a network, the method comprising:

determining at least one flow rate associated with a plurality of packets;

marking at least one predetermined bit in at least one of the plurality of packets if the at least one flow rate is greater than a predetermined rate; and

controlling an admission of additional packets into the network based at least in part on the marking of the at least one predetermined bit in the at least one of the plurality of packets.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein

the network comprises a plurality of network elements, and

the at least one flow rate is determined at a first network element, where the first network element is part of an access link of the network.

3. The method according to claim 1, where the at least one of the plurality of packets comprises at least one signaling packet.

4. The method according to claim 3, where the at least one signaling packet originates from an end terminal outside the network.

5. The method according to claim 4, where information associated with the at least one predetermined bit in the at least one signaling packet is communicated to the end terminal.

6. The method according to claim 4, where the end terminal echoes information associated with the at least one predetermined bit in the at least one signaling packet in a transmission to the network.

7. The method according to claim 1 further comprising denying the admission of the additional packets into the network if the at least one predetermined bit in the at least one of the plurality of packets is marked.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the admission of the additional packets into the network is controlled by an entity that controls the network.

9. The method according to claim 1, where the admission of the

additional packets is based at least in part on priorities or importance of the plurality of packets and the additional packets.

10. The method according to claim 1, where the plurality of packets comprise real-time packets.

11. The method according to claim 1, where the plurality of packets comprise Internet Protocol (IP) packets.

12. The method according to claim 11, where the plurality of packets comprise voice over IP (VoIP) packets.

13. The method according to claim 11, where the at least one predetermined bit is part of a Differentiated Services field in an IP header of the at least one of the plurality of packets.

14. The method according to claim 1, where the predetermined rate is based on a network bandwidth allocated for the plurality of packets.

15. The method according to claim 14, where the predetermined rate is raised to a value above the allocated network bandwidth

for a predetermined period of time.

16. At least one signal embodied in at least one carrier wave for transmitting a computer program of instructions configured to be readable by at least one processor for instructing the at least one processor to execute a computer process for performing the method as recited in claim 1.

17. At least one processor readable carrier for storing a computer program of instructions configured to be readable by at least one processor for instructing the at least one processor to execute a computer process for performing the method as recited in claim 1.

18. A system for admission control of packet flows, the system comprising:

at least one network element that

determines at least one flow rate associated with a plurality of packets, and

marks at least one predetermined bit in at least one of the plurality of packets if the at least one flow rate is greater than a predetermined rate; and

an admission control module that controls an admission of

additional packets into the network based at least in part on the marking of the at least one predetermined bit in the at least one of the plurality of packets.

19. A system for admission control of packet flows, the system comprising:

means for determining at least one flow rate associated with a plurality of packets;

means for marking at least one predetermined bit in at least one of the plurality of packets if the at least one flow rate is greater than a predetermined rate; and

means for controlling an admission of additional packets into the network based at least in part on the marking of the at least one predetermined bit in the at least one of the plurality of packets.